



March 1, 2016

Frequently Asked Questions: Group Event Business License in the City of Beaufort

1. What is the Business License for Group Events?

In February 2016, the Beaufort City Council adopted an ordinance amending the section relating to the licensing of group events. Basically, the new rule allows an event organizer to buy and secure an umbrella business license to cover all the participating vendors – rather than each vendor needing to obtain an individual business license for the event or festival.

For instance, if someone plans a fundraiser within the Beaufort City limits and invites 10 different food trucks to sell their items, the organizer can apply for one group event business license to cover all the food trucks.

The goal is to streamline the process and make it easier for organizers and participants [to](#) secure the proper business licenses.

2. What are the benefits?

The primary benefit for everyone is clearing up confusion about requirements for business licenses at large events. The new system requires a group business license from the event, festival or show organizer only, and merchants and vendors participating in the event are covered.

The amended ordinance exempts public market and short-term vendors – such as the Farmers' Market. Also exempted from the group event business license requirement are the annual Beaufort Water Festival, Gullah Festival, Taste of Beaufort and Shrimp Festival based on their existing management structure at the time the ordinance change.

Also, professional conferences and trade shows to which the public [isn't](#) invited aren't required to obtain a group event business license.

Public shows, where admission is open and where exhibitors present goods, wares, merchandise or services for sale, rent or promotional purposes, are required to get the new group event business license.

3. When does this take effect?

The amended ordinance took effect when the Beaufort City Council gave it final reading approval on Feb. 9, 2016.

4. How much does it cost?

The group event business license fee is based on the anticipated number of participating merchants/vendors:

Tier I	From 1-5 merchants	\$200
Tier II	From 6-10 merchants	\$400
Tier III	From 11-15 merchants	\$600
Tier IV	More than 15 merchants	\$1,000

Note: If a participating vendor already has a City of Beaufort business license (a restaurant, for example), that vendor isn't included in the tally for the group license. So, if an event has six merchants, but one of them holds a current city business license, the event organizer would need to pay only for the Tier I license of \$200.

5. Why did the Beaufort City Council make this change?

In recent years, the city required that all vendors involved in festivals and group events receive and display an individual business license for the period of the event. As the number of events that took place within the City grew, it became increasingly confusing to the merchants, participants and organizers who were new to the process.

City Council believes that vendors and other small businesses add to the joy and excitement of festivals and group events, and it is in the best interests of the city and the citizens of Beaufort to support and promote such activity under the umbrella of a business license issued to the festival or group promoter.

The new requirement applies to all events open to the public within the Beaufort City limits, whether on private, commercial or public property.